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**Note:** The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**.

**Program Authority:** 42 U.S.C. 2756b.

Dated: March 16, 1999.

**Greg Woods,**

*Chief Operating Officer, Office of Student Financial Assistance.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Availability of the Commercial Light Water Reactor Final Environmental Impact Statement, the Accelerator Production of Tritium Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the Tritium Extraction Facility Final Environmental Impact Statement

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of three Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs): (1) the Commercial Light Water Reactor (CLWR) EIS, DOE/EIS-0288; (2) the Accelerator Production of Tritium (APT) EIS, DOE/EIS-0270; and, (3) the Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF) EIS, DOE/EIS-0271. The CLWR EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with producing tritium at one or more of five commercial light water reactors operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority. The APT EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating a linear accelerator at the Savannah River Site, near Aiken, South Carolina, for the production of tritium. The TEF EIS evaluates the environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of a tritium extraction facility,

at the Savannah River Site, to extract tritium from commercial light water reactor targets and targets of similar design.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the CLWR Final EIS, or its Summary may be obtained by calling 1-800-776-2765, or writing to: Mr. Jay Rose, Office of Technical and Environmental Support, DP-45, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585.

A copy of the APT Final EIS, and/or the TEF Final EIS, or their Summaries may be obtained by calling 1-800-881-7292, or writing to: Andrew Grainger, U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations, Office, Building 742A, Room 122, Aiken, South Carolina 29802.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information on the DOE NEPA process, please contact: Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for providing the nation with nuclear weapons and ensuring those weapons remain safe and reliable. Tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, is an essential component of every weapon in the current and projected U.S. nuclear stockpile.

Unlike other nuclear materials used in nuclear weapons, tritium decays at a rate of 5.5 percent per year. Accordingly, as long as the nation relies on a nuclear deterrent, the tritium in each nuclear weapon must be replenished periodically.

At present, the U.S. nuclear weapons complex does not have the capability to produce the amounts of tritium that will be required to support the nation's future stockpile. In 1995, DOE prepared the Tritium Supply and Recycling Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). In that PEIS, DOE considered a range of reasonable alternatives for obtaining the required quantities of tritium. In the December 1995 Record of Decision for the Tritium Supply and Recycling PEIS, DOE decided to pursue a dual-track approach on the two most promising tritium-supply alternatives: (1) to initiate purchase of an existing commercial reactor (operating or partially complete) or irradiation services with an option to purchase the reactor for conversion to a defense facility; and (2) to design, build, and test critical components of an accelerator system for tritium

production (the Savannah River Site was selected as the location for an accelerator, should one be built).

On December 22, 1998, Secretary Bill Richardson announced that commercial light water reactors will be the primary tritium supply technology. The Secretary designated the Watts Bar Unit 1 nuclear reactor near Spring City, Tennessee, and the Sequoyah Unit 1 and 2 nuclear reactors near Soddy-Daisy, Tennessee, as the preferred CLWRs for tritium production. Each of these reactors is operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority. In his December 22, 1998 announcement, the Secretary also designated the APT as the backup technology for tritium supply. As a backup, DOE will continue with developmental activities and preliminary design, but will not construct the accelerator. Finally, in selecting the CLWR as the primary tritium supply technology, the Secretary reaffirmed a prior decision that a new tritium extraction capability will be constructed and operated at the Savannah River Site.

The final CLWR Final EIS is a stand alone document, which incorporates comments on the draft CLWR EIS received from the public. Because there were only minor changes to the APT and TEF draft EISs, DOE will not prepare completely revised documents as final EISs. Rather, DOE finalized the EISs by reference to the draft EISs and have issued these documents as records of changes to the draft EIS. Persons desiring copies of the APT and TEF draft EISs should contact Mr. Grainger at the above address.

No sooner than 30 days after publication of the Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register**, DOE intends to issue a consolidated Record of Decision to formalize the December programmatic announcement and complete project-specific decisions for the three EIS.

Signed in Washington, DC this 15th day of March 1999, for the United States Department of Energy.

**Victor H. Reis,**

*Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

[FE Docket No. PP-197]

### Notice Extending the Public Scoping Period Public Service Company of New Mexico

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.